

Ser. No. 10/733,510

Remarks

Claims 1-14 were pending in the application. Claims 1-5 and 7-14 were rejected. Claim 6 was merely objected to and no claims were allowed. By the foregoing amendment, claim 2 is canceled, claims 1 and 3 are amended, and claims 15-24 are added. No new matter is presented.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant appreciates the indication of allowable subject matter in claim 6. This has been presented in independent form as claim 17. Its dependent claims are supported by as-filed claims 2-4.

Claim Rejections-35 U.S.C. 102

Claims 1-5, 8, and 9 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by McNickle et al. (U.S. Patent No. 5,558,341). Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

McNickle et al. discloses a shaft seal. In applying this to the present claims, the examiner appears to be mixing and matching elements of different components and different embodiments of McNickle et al. Accordingly, the rejection is believed improper. Specifically, element 2 was asserted as the body, no reference numeral was asserted as identifying the faces, element 82 was asserted as the inboard surface, element 38 was identified as the channel, elements 36 were identified as the ports, element 8 was identified as the sealing ring, and no reference numeral was identified as the divider. The examiner asserted a flow of fluid "which could be a cooling fluid" as entering the flange through the ports.

Clearly, regarding claim 5 (and new independent claim 22), the examiner's identified body is not the claimed "unitary metal member." The examiner's identified bolts holes are not in the same piece as the channel.

Regarding claim 4 (and new independent claim 21), the examiner's identified first and second ports are not in the perimeter of the elements the examiner combined to yield the body. Rather, they are intermediate.

Regarding claim 3, there is no McNickle et al. "sealing ring residing in an outboard portion of the channel." The examiner has identified the sealing ring as being the element in which the channel is formed thus rendering anticipation of claim 3 an impossibility.

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Regarding claim 2 (now claim 1), the channel is not in the first face (which is one of the faces between which the bolt holes extend).

Regarding claim 8, McNickle et al. fails to disclose a flow of liquid entering the flange through a first port and exiting through the second port. All the examiner's identified ports are vented to the same area (reference numeral 4).

Added claim 15 identifies the body in combination with bolts and associated flanges of first and second conduits (see, paragraph 38, last sentence). Dependent claim 16 identifies the cooling liquid as aqueous (see, claim 8 and paragraph 0042, approx. 9 lines from the end). There is no suggestion for this bolting combination. Added independent claim 24 references the flow of a cooling liquid and identifies the ports as not in the inboard surface (e.g., so the liquid can flow along a flowpath not intersecting the interior of the body (see, claim 14).

Claims Rejections-35 U.S.C. 103

Claims 10-14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being obvious and unpatentable over Plavnik et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,684,823) in view of McNickle et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

Plavnik et al. is cited for the basics of a soot blower. Interestingly, the examiner asserted a motivation to combine the references as being "for the purpose of locally cooling the outlet portion of the soot blower conduit." Office action, page 3. No citation was given. Clearly, there is no suggestion to attempt to modify the shaft seal of McNickle et al. as a cooling flange in a soot blower apparatus.

Added independent claim 23 is supported by claim 10 and is similarly patentable.

Claim 7 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over McNickle et al. Applicant respectfully traverses the rejection.

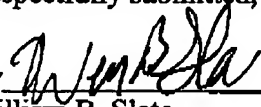
The examiner asserted it would have been an obvious matter of design choice to provide a given number of bolt holes. The rejection is believed overcome because the rejection of the base claim is overcome.

Accordingly, Applicant submits that claims 1 and 3-24 are in condition for allowance.

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Please charge any fees or deficiency or credit any overpayment to the Deposit Account of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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